make available "No Frills account" with restricted transactions and minimum or no balance requirement.

(2) Know your Customer (KYC) procedure for opening accounts has been simplified for those customers with bank balances less than Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1,00,000/-.

(3) banks advised to provide General Purpose Credit Cards with a maximum limit of Rs. 25,000/- in rural and semi urban areas for hassle free credit.

(4) Banks are being encouraged to use the services of Non-Governmental Organisations/Self help Groups (NGOs/SHGs), Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) and other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as intermediaries in providing financial and banking services through the use of Business Facilitator and Business Correspondent models.

(d) Does not arise.

Equity stake to NYSE in BSE

2168. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a team from New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) recently visited Mumbai to talk with the BSE brass for strategic equity stake in the Mumbai Stock Exchange;

(b) whether BSE reportedly aims to pare Member's stake by selling 26 percent to a strategic partner and negotiations with NYSE are in final stage;

(c) whether BSE has also evinced interest from technological bourse NASDAQ to pick up the strategic stake in BSE; and

(d) if so, what advantages will accrue to BSE by offering stake to NYSE as well as opening options to banks, FIS or foreign bilateral agencies etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) The Bombay Stock Exchange Limited (BSE) have informed that they are in the process of identifying

suitable entities for induction as strategic partners. Several leading exchanges, including New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ, have visited them recently for making a preliminary assessment in this regard. However, the SEBI regulations specify that no person shall, directly or indirectly, acquire or hold more than five percent in the paid up equity capital of a recognised stock exchange.

(d) The BSE have informed that tie-up with large global exchanges as strategic partner would enable them to enhance their competitive strength in the market in terms of product innovation, larger participation by institutional holders, technology up gradation and global practices and processes.

Suicides by farmers

2169. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of farmers who have committed suicides being unable to pay the loan amount, during the period for the last six months, State-wise;

(b) the total amount that has not been paid by such farmers during this period, State-wise;

(c) whether such loans are granted without investigating and identifying usual conditions of the farmers; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Central Government for the protection of the life of poor common man particularly a farmer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) Indebtness from formal and informal sources is only one of the many reasons for suicides by farmers. The reasons behind the suicides by the farmers are many. Excessive borrowing from formal and non-formal sources, social tension, continuous drought affecting the yield and their income, emerging changes in social milieu and alienation of the individuals from family and society are some of the major reasons reported for the distress situation of the farmers leading to suicide.